CLAIMS

1.   A graphical user interface tool for use in connection with a computer program which can simultaneously display multiple files on a computer display device, each file appearing in a different panel on said display device, said tool comprising:

means for allowing a user to invoke said tool in association with a selected one of said multiple files using a computer interface device;

means for causing a graphic representation of said tool to appear on said display device responsive to being invoked by said user, said graphic representation comprising a plurality of portions, each corresponding to an operation that can be performed in connection with said selected file;

means for allowing said user to select one of said plurality of operations using a user interface device; and

means for causing said operation to be performed on said selected file.

2.   The tool of claim 1 wherein said plurality of operations differ depending on the selected file.

3.   The tool of claim 1 wherein said graphical representation comprises an icon comprising said plurality of segments.

4,   The tool of claim 3 wherein said icon is circular and said segments comprise arc portions of said circular icon.

5.   The tool of claim 3 further comprising:

means for causing said graphical representation to appear in said panel associated with said selected file.

6.   The tool of claim 3 wherein said means for allowing a user to invoke said tool in association with said selected file associates said tool with said file displayed in said panel within which a cursor was positioned when said tool was invoked.

7.   The tool of claim 6 further comprising means for allowing said user to move said graphical representation outside of said panel associated with said selected file without switching said selected file.

8.   The tool of claim 1 wherein said computer program is a Web browser and said files are Web pages accessed by said Web browser.

9.   The tool of claim 3 wherein said means for allowing said user to select one of said operations is responsive to said user positioning said cursor in a position indicative of a particular segment of said icon to tentatively select said

operation corresponding to said segment and performing a
subsequent act to select said operation corresponding to said
segment.

10.   The tool of claim 9 further comprising:

5   means for causing a line to appear on said display
device, when said icon appears on said display device, said
line having a first end point centered on said icon and a
second endpoint at said cursor.

11.   The tool of claim 10 wherein the act of said user
10   positioning said cursor such that said line intersects one of
said segments comprises tentatively selecting said operation
corresponding to said segment.

12.   The tool of claim 11 wherein said icon is circular
and said segments comprise arc portions of said circular icon
15   arranged such that said line cannot intersect more than one of
said arc portions simultaneously.

13.   The tool of claim 12 wherein, when said line
intersects a one of said segments, the appearance of said
intersected segment is altered to visually distinguish it from
20   said other segments that are not tentatively selected.

13. The tool of claim 3 wherein said icon further comprises a portion that indicates which of said plurality of panels is said associated panel.

14. The tool of claim 13 wherein said portion is in the center of said icon.

15. The tool of claim 1 wherein one of said operations is transferring said selected file from said associated panel to a predetermined other one of said panels.

16. The tool of claim 15 wherein said transferring operation comprises transferring said selected file to said predetermined other panel and transferring said file displayed in said predetermined other panel to said associated panel.

17. The tool of claim 4 wherein said graphical representation of said tool further comprises a separate horizontal toolbar that duplicates the functionality of said icon.

18. The tool of claim 17 wherein, responsive to said tool being invoked, said horizontal toolbar always appears at a same predetermined position in said display device.

19.   The tool of claim 1 wherein said multiple files are simultaneously active.

20.   A method of interfacing with a computer program that can simultaneously display multiple files on a computer

5   display device, each file appearing in a different panel on said display device, said method comprising the steps of:

allowing a user to invoke said tool in association with a selected one of said multiple files using a computer interface device;

10   causing a graphic representation of said tool to appear on said display device responsive to being invoked by said user, said graphic representation comprising a plurality of portions, each corresponding to an operation that can be performed in connection with said selected file;

15   allowing said user to select one of said plurality of operations using a user interface device; and

causing said operation to be performed on said selected file.

21.   The method of claim 20 wherein said plurality of

20   operations differ depending on the selected file.

22.   The method of claim 20 wherein said graphical representation comprises an icon comprising said plurality of segments.

23.   The method of claim 22 wherein said icon is circular and said segments comprise arc portions of said circular icon.

24.   The method of claim 22 further comprising the steps of:

5   causing said graphical representation to appear in said panel associated with said selected file.

25.   The method of claim 22 wherein said step of allowing a user to invoke said tool in association with said selected file associates said tool with said file displayed in said

10   panel within which said cursor was positioned when said tool was invoked.

26.   The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of:

allowing said user to move said graphical representation

15   outside of said panel associated with said selected file without switching said selected file.

27.   The method of claim 20 wherein said computer program is a Web browser and said files are Web pages accessed by said Web browser.

20   28.   The method of claim 22 wherein said step of allowing said user to select one of said operations is responsive to

said user positioning said cursor in a position indicative of

a particular segment of said graphical representation to

tentatively select said operation corresponding to said

segment and performing a subsequent act to select said

5   operation corresponding to said segment.

29.   The method of claim 28 further comprising the step

of:

causing a line to appear on said display device, when

said icon appears on said display device, said line having a

10   first end point centered on said icon and a second endpoint at

said cursor.

30.   The method of claim 29 wherein the act of said user

positioning said cursor such that said line intersects one of

said segments comprises tentatively selecting said operation

15   corresponding to said segment.

31.   The method of claim 30 wherein said icon is circular

and said segments comprise arc portions of said circular icon

arranged such that said line cannot intersect more than one of

said arc portions simultaneously and wherein, when said line

20   intersects a one of said segments, the appearance of said

intersected segment is altered to visually distinguish it from

said other segments that are not tentatively selected.

32. The method of claim 22 wherein said icon further comprises a portion that indicates which of said plurality of panels is said associated panel.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein said portion is in the center of said icon.

34. The method of claim 20 wherein one of said operations is transferring said selected file from said associated panel to a predetermined other one of said panels.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein said transferring operation comprises the steps of:

transferring said selected file to said predetermined other panel; and

transferring said file displayed in said predetermined other panel to said associated panel.

36. The method of claim 23 wherein said graphical representation of said tool further comprises a separate horizontal toolbar that duplicates the functionality of said icon.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein, responsive to said tool being invoked, said horizontal toolbar always appears at a same predetermined position in said display device.